Research Notes for Joseph Sheppard (1802 - 1882)

Research Overview:

Joseph Sheppard and his wife, Hannah, appear as a cohesive family unit both before and after their immigration to the United States. Born in Ireland in the early nineteenth century, Joseph and Hannah can be placed in the parish of Newport, County Tipperary, where several of their children were baptized. After emigrating, the family settled first in Sterling, Illinois, before relocating to Clinton, Iowa, where the Sheppards made a permanent home.

In Iowa, the Sheppard family appears consistently as a stable household. Joseph and Hannah remained together, raised their children, and lived out their later years in Clinton, where they are buried alongside other family members. Many of their grandchildren were born and raised in Clinton as well, and while some died young, the family remained closely rooted there across generations.

While Joseph's later life in Iowa is well documented, questions remain about the family's earlier movements, including their port of entry into the United States and the reasons for their initial settlement in Sterling, Illinois. These unanswered questions sit within an otherwise solid framework and point to a family whose story is shaped less by disruption than by the gradual establishment of a shared life in Iowa.

Speculative Narrative:

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Background to the Research

Joseph Sheppard's origins in Ireland were unknown until his gravestone in Iowa identified his place of birth as Newport, County Tipperary. Parish records in Newport include Joseph's 1802 baptism, with sponsors named, as well as his marriage to Hannah Hartigan, also recorded with sponsors. Baptismal records further show that Joseph and Hannah had at least five children baptized in Newport parish, identifying Hannah's maiden name as Hartigan. Parish records in Newport survive in enough detail to document this family's life in Ireland. Questions remain about the family's migration to the United States, including their port of entry and the reasons for their initial settlement in Sterling, Illinois, before moving on to Clinton, Iowa.

Time Line:

9 Jan 1802—Birth at Newport, Tipperary, Ireland.[1] His Iowa gravestone gives his birth date as Jan 9, 1803.

12 Jan 1802 - Baptism at Newport, Tipperary, Ireland.[2]

Sponsors: Malachias O'Keefe and Margaret Whila

28 Feb 1835 Marriage to Hannah Hartigan (1805 - 1890) at Newport, Tipperary, Ireland.[3]

Witness: Edmund Hartigan and Catherine Sheppard.

[1] Baptismal record

[2] Baptismal record

[3] Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915

11 Feb 1836 - Birth of son James T Sheppard (1836-1917) at Newport, Tipperary, Ireland.[4]

May 1837 - Birth of son John Sheppard (1837 - 1890) at Newport, Tipperary, Ireland.[5]

13 Oct 1939 - Birth of son David Sheppard (1839-) at Newport, Tipperary, Ireland.[6]

Aug 1842 - Birth of daughter Mary Sheppard (1842 -) at Newport, Tipperary, Ireland.[7]

Aug 1842 - Birth of daughter Bridget Sheppard (1844 - 1872) at Newport, Tipperary, Ireland.[8]

Notes on Children:

Baptismal records in Newport parish document the births of David Sheppard (1839) and Mary Sheppard (1842). Neither child appears in United States census records with the family, and no records have yet been identified that account for their later lives. Their absence from the U.S. record is noted

[4] "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1740-1900", database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6NQ5-4G7D: 28 August 2023), Joseph Shepperd in entry for James Shepperd, 1836.

[5] "Iowa, County Death Records, 1880-1992", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVJP-FXVB: Sun Mar 10 09:59:06 UTC 2024), Entry for Edward A Sheppard and John Sheppard, 08 Oct 1928.

[6] "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1740-1900", database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6NQW-RJ1Q: 28 August 2023), Joseph Sheppard in entry for David Sheppard, 1839.

[7] Birth of daughter Mary Sheppard

[8] "Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1740-1900", database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6681-K3FH: 28 August 2023), Joseph Shepard in entry for Bridget Shepard, 1844.

here, particularly given the gap between the birth of the last known child in Ireland and the family's arrival in the United States.

Context: County Tipperary in the Late 1840s

The years following the baptism of the Sheppards' last known child in Ireland coincide with the period of the Great Famine (1845 - 1852). County Tipperary, like much of rural Ireland, experienced severe food shortages, starvation, population loss, and widespread emigration during the late 1840s. While no records have been identified that describe how these conditions affected Joseph and Hannah Sheppard directly, the timing places their family in Ireland during a period of significant disruption. This context is noted here to situate the gap between the Irish parish records and the family's later appearance in the United States.

1842 - Arrival

1843 - Living in Sterling, Iowa

The next records for the Sheppard family place them in the United States after an undocumented interval following their time in Ireland.

4 Oct 1859 - Selected US Naturalization Index living at Rockdale, Iowa.

1860 - US Census at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[9]

Joseph Sheppard, 57

Hannah Sheppard, 50

James Sheppard, 23

[9] "United States Census, 1860", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M825-9X6: Mon Jul 08 06:56:27 UTC 2024), Entry for Joseph Sheppard and Hannah Sheppard, 1860.

Bridget Sheppard, 13

1870 - US Census at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[10]

Joseph Sheppard, 68

Hannah Sheppard, 63

Bridget Sheppard, 26

6 Jun 1872 - Death of daughter Bridget Sheppard (1844 - 1872) at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[11]

Bridget Sheppard was still living with her parents at the time of the 1870 census. She married Thomas Kennedy shortly thereafter but died in 1872, only a short time after her marriage; the cause of her death is unknown. No records have yet been found that account for the later life or death of her husband, and his whereabouts after Bridget's death remain unknown.

1880 - US Census at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[12]

Joseph Sheppard - white, male, age 78, born Ireland, parent born Ireland.

Hannah Sheppard - white, female, age 76, born Ireland, parents born Ireland.

[10] "United States Census, 1870", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MDJR-6CK: Mon Jul 08 13:07:08 UTC 2024), Entry for Joseph Sheppard and Hannah Sheppard, 1870.

[11] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVK3-8L8F : 10 September 2021), Bridget Sheppard Kennedy, ; Burial, Clinton, Clinton, Iowa, United States of America, Saint Mary's Cemetery; citing record ID 32389752, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

[12] "United States Census, 1880", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MD23-YT1: Sat Mar 09 03:48:19 UTC 2024), Entry for Joseph Sheppard and Hannah Sheppard, 1880.

The next generation of the Sheppard family was large and closely rooted in Clinton. Sons James Sheppard married twice and was the father of thirteen children, while John Sheppard had nine children. Most of the Sheppards' grandchildren spent their lives in Clinton, appearing repeatedly in local records. By contrast, relatively few great-grandchildren were born, marking a sharp narrowing of the family line after the second generation.

1 Sep 1882 - Death at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[13]

Sep 1882 - Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[14]

No obituary has been found. This is Joseph's gravestone inscription:

Inscription

Joseph Sheppard

Born in Newport
Co. Tipperary, IRE
Jan 5, 1803
Died Sep 1, 1882

Hannah
Wife of Jos Sheppard
Died Feb 23, 1850
Aged 81 Yrs.
Rest In Peace

Bridget
Wife of T. Kennedy
Died June 6, 1872
Aged 24 Yrs 5 months

[13] "Iowa, County Death Records, 1880-1992", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVJP-P2BZ: Fri Mar 08 14:38:21 UTC 2024), Entry for Joseph Shepherd, 04 Aug 1882.

[14] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVK3-8L81 : 29 May 2020), Joseph Sheppard, 1882; Burial, , ; citing record ID , *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.